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THE INSURGENT GOVERNMENT IN CUBA.

BY HORATIO S. RUBENS, COUNSEL OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY PARTY.

The Cuban Rebellion of 1868 proved the power of endurance and resistance of the Cuban people. The present uprising proves that the Cubans are good organizers, thoroughly practical and amenable to discipline. The 'Ten Years' War was projected by the more educated part of the community; the present insurrection is the result of a popular upheaval.

The great secret of the success of the present Cuban movement lies in its organization. It is claimed that the Cuban people are incapable of self-government, but the facts prove the falsity of this statement.

It is not my purpose to show the causes which led to the uprising. However, it must be borne in mind that on the termination of the Ten Years' War, and the failure of Spain to keep faith with the Cubans and give them that home rule for which alone they laid down their arms, a large number of Cubans left the island to live in the United States, Central America, and the West Indies. Most of these were veteran fighters; all were opposed to Spanish rule.

Time passed; Spanish rule had become more intolerable than ever. The Cubans on the island looked to the veteran leaders abroad for counsel and aid. The spirit of revolt was there, but organization was needed.

José Martí assumed the great task. He organized the Cubans abroad into clubs, and these clubs were associated to constitute the Cuban Revolutionary Party. Every member of the party became not only a worker, but a regular contributor to the revolutionary fund. The veterans were pledged to lead in the coming conflict. It was agreed that General Maximo Gomez, then in

Santo Domingo, should have supreme command. On the island were established secret committees which completed the organization there, in accordance with Marti's plans.

It might be asked why, if the movement was a popular one, there was not from the first a general uprising. It must be remembered that the Cubans were not allowed under Spanish rule to bear arms. Every rifle had to be secretly bought or smuggled into the country. In the western districts those which had been provided were seized by the Spanish government. To rush into the field unarmed would have been madness. A nucleus had to be formed, and it was much safer to do this in the mountainous East. The 24th of February, 1895, the very day set by Marti for the uprising, saw the formation of this nucleus in the province of Santiago. In April the celebrated Maceo brothers landed, as did General Gomez and Marti shortly after. Professional and business men, engineers, and men of leisure flocked from the cities to the insurgent standards, leaving their families behind them. The country people applied for admission to the ranks in great numbers, until the leaders decided to take no man unless he could be armed with a rifle. Gomez proceeded into the province of Puerto Principe, and the men of that district rose and joined him. Generals Roloff and Sanchez, landing with arms and ammunition in the province of Santa Clara, which is west of Puerto Principe, were joined by its inhabitants. From Santa Clara, the next westerly province, Matanzas, was organized; and towards the end of 1895, Generals Gomez and Antonio Maceo, in their now famous invasion of the western provinces, carried the organization to the western extremity of the island, and for the first time in the history of Cuba there was a general uprising, covering the length and breadth of the island.

Many rifles and cartridges were bought from corrupt Spanish officials, and some were captured; but the thorough organization abroad was relied upon to increase the armament and supply the necessary ammunition.

There has been, especially of late, much criticism of those Cubans who reside abroad, it being claimed that they are too cowardly to fight. There never was need for them in the field, but for the money which they laboriously earned, and which they have given so freely, there was much need. The constant sacrifice of the Cubans abroad to supply the patriots in the field with arms

and ammunition, is as remarkable as it is touching. These men, who have been called cowards, have proved themselves to be endowed with the highest moral courage and capacity for self-sacrifice, and they are an indispensable part of the revolutionary movement. The so-called Cuban Junta, which is really the American Delegation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and also the representatives abroad of the Cuban Republic, is responsible to the civil government for the fulfillment of its various and onerous duties.

It has been said that a large part of the rural population are not in sympathy with the uprising. As has been pointed out, orders had been given to receive no recruits who could not be armed. This, perforce, compelled thousands to remain at home, ready to help the army by contributions of food and clothing. Captain-General Martinez Campos confessed that the country people were all rebels, ready to spy on him, and give aid, comfort, and valuable information to the Cubans, while the Spanish troops were invariably misled by false information. He frankly stated that military operations were useless under these conditions. Weyler, too, became satisfied of this, and evolved a plan of concentration of the country people in the towns, destroying their habitations and their crops, and confiscating their stock. The wiser among them escaped in time to join the insurgents, and in view of the circumstances the military leaders bowed to the inevitable. Thus we have what is called the '*impedimenta*'—camp followers, armed for the most part with machetes—who are useless in most of the fighting, but a highly valuable auxiliary in foraging for the army, herding horses and cattle, working in the shops of the government and raising crops. The fact that some four hundred thousand reconcentrados have been starved to death by Weyler's decree, proves that they were known to be in sympathy with the insurgents, not with the Spaniards. The same is true of the unfortunate remnant which survives. Spain would not exterminate her loyal subjects. For the same reasons, thousands of insurgents in the cities have been forced to remain at home. They helped their more unfortunate countrymen until all classes suffered equal destitution. In every city there is a secret organization of the insurgents, which keeps in close touch with their comrades in the field and abroad, despite the vigilance of the Spanish authorities.

On September 13, 1895, delegates from the several provinces met at Jimaguayu, adopted a constitution which was to last for two years, and elected the officers provided for. Salvador Cisneros, who renounced the Spanish title of Marquis of Santa Lucia, was elected President, and Bartolome Maso, Vice-President. These, together with a government council, consisting of a Secretary of War, a Secretary of Foreign Affairs, a Secretary of the Treasury and a Secretary of the Interior, were vested with legislative functions. Sub-secretaries, Governors of provinces and their lieutenants were then appointed. The entire island was divided into small districts, called prefectures, and responsible persons were appointed as prefects. The prefects, besides being charged with the safety of those residing within their jurisdiction, have judicial functions and are responsible for the local property and interests of the Republic.

Tanneries, smithies for the repair of arms, shops for manufacturing saddlery, shoes, and clothing, the raising of crops, the herding and propagation of cattle in secure places, and the care of spare or overworked horses are all in charge of the prefects. A department of communications, with its chiefs and subordinates, facilitates correspondence on the island. Responsible tax-collectors receive the imposts decreed by the government. In the year ending 1897 over \$400,000 was collected by the Republic by way of taxes. The organized Cubans abroad constituted a source of steady income, besides which there were large extraordinary donations by individual patriots. One lady contributed more than \$120,000. On the occasion of Gen. Antonio Maceo's death an extraordinary contribution was made by the Paris colony of more than \$100,000. Little more than \$100,000, face value, of the bonds issued by the Republic, have been sold, at an average of forty cents on the dollar. The sale or grant of concessions or privileges has been absolutely refused. In short, the utmost care has been exercised to avoid the creation of liabilities.

The army is subordinate to the civil government. No military commissions, except the lowest grades, can be given except on recommendation by the Commander-in-Chief and the approval of the government. The army was wholly volunteer without pay, until the government passed a law providing for the payment of salaries, after the establishment of peace, for the term of actual service. The pay ranges from thirty dollars per month

for privates up to five hundred dollars per month for Major-Generals. The object of this legislation was to provide for the speedy disbandment of the army when the war ends, by enabling its members to return immediately to their peaceful pursuits, and placing a considerable sum in circulation. It is also the intention of the government to supply with tools and implements those who are in need, so that they may at once resume their former trades and occupations. To accomplish this purpose a loan will be easily floated, as the credit of the island has been kept unpledged. The civil government was at first confined to the east, but broadened with the spread of the military occupation.

In October, 1897, at the expiration of the term fixed by the constitution, a new constituent assembly was elected in the manner prescribed by law. This assembly amended the old constitution, and elected a new set of government officials. Bartolome Maso is now President and Mendez Capote Vice-president. The council of government consists of the President, Vice-President, and Secretary of War, José B. Aleman; a Secretary of Foreign Relations, Andres Moreno de la Torre; a Secretary of the Treasury, Ernesto Fonts Stirling; and a Secretary of the Interior, Manuel Ramon Silva. The Secretary of the Council is José Clemente Vivanco. The constitution provides that upon the establishment of peace there shall be an immediate general election of a new government at which everyone shall have free voice and vote.

There was no attempt on the part of the military element to influence the elections. The seat of the government was formerly at Cubitas, in Puerto Principe Province; it is now at Agramonte, in the same Province.

That the government has moved about is true, but so did our own revolutionary government whenever it was threatened. The reason, however, for the movements of the Cuban government was not that its safety was imperilled, for the situations selected have been almost impregnable, but because of the necessity of conferring personally with its generals. It would have been inconvenient, and probably seriously detrimental to the military movements, to have insisted on the generals leaving their forces to repair to the seat of government for conference.

In the eastern districts, where the country is in almost undisputed possession of the Cubans, newspapers are published, and

even schools have been established. The constituent assembly of 1895, and again that of 1897, elected Maximo Gomez Commander-in-Chief. There are six army corps. The first, second, and third army corps are commanded by Gen. Calixto Garcia, but the first is under the immediate command of Pedro Perez, Jesus Rabi is in charge of the second, and Gen. Xavier Vega of the third. The fourth army corps is commanded by Gen. Francisco Carrillo, the fifth, in two divisions, by Gens. Pedro Betancourt and Alejandro Rodriguez, and, finally, the sixth is under Gen. Pedro Diaz. The fifth, and sixth are, however, subject to the superior command of Gen. José Maria Rodriguez.

There are now about 40,000 well armed Cubans in the field. There are, besides, the *impedimenta* and others who have sought safety within the Cuban lines, amounting to about 100,000 additional men, all waiting for rifles.

From the outset, the Cubans realized the impossibility of carrying on a warfare of pitched battles, with the difficulty of obtaining sufficient arms and ammunition. When it is remembered that at one time Spain had as many as 220,000 soldiers in Cuba, the wisdom of guerilla warfare is evident. Thoroughly acquainted with every foot of the country, the Cubans always choose their ground. They cannot be severely defeated, because where victory is impossible they scatter only to reunite at a place agreed upon. It is like striking at a swarm of mosquitoes; you may crush a few, but the rest escape to trouble you anew. The Cubans fight in open order, while the Spaniards invariably fight in line of battle, or in squares. Whenever threatened by Cuban cavalry, the Spaniards form into square, thus offering a broad mark. When the Spanish vanguard is attacked on the march, it generally falls back on the main body, which then forms for action. Thus it is that a few Cubans will harass a Spanish column for miles, retiring slowly, forcing the regulars to form time and again, inflicting numerous losses, and goading the enemy to madness at the impossibility of retaliation. Often they draw the Spaniards slowly on into the ambush previously prepared, which the luxuriant vegetation renders it comparatively easy to do.

The chief reason for Spain's military failure, however, is that she has never had a proper commissary. Even when driving the Cubans before them, they cannot follow for more than three days

without falling back on a base of supplies. The Cubans live entirely on the country : yam, yucca, fruits, sweet potatoes, cassava, and even cabbage palms and sour oranges will sustain the acclimated Cubans, while the Spaniards sicken and die on this diet. Most of the Spanish losses have been caused by fevers and dysentery. In such a climate bacon and beans, the principal food supplied to the Spanish troops, is bound to cause sickness. Sanitation is a thing unknown. On going into camp, the Spanish officers leave the men to look after the horses and themselves at will.

The Spanish soldiers, mere conscripts, have no opportunity of rifle practice, as we understand it. They are simply trained to fire in volleys. They are mostly armed with Mauser rifles, which have five shots in the magazine.

There is some attempt at aim with the first shot, but the remaining four are fired wildly, too often from the hip. The result is a flight of whistling steel-jacketed bullets far above the heads of the enemy. The artillerists are equally bad shots. The Spaniards, unlike the Cubans, never march at night. The Cubans are excellent horsemen, while the poor Spanish peasant lads, from sixteen to twenty-two years of age, make but indifferent cavalry. The Cuban infantry can outfoot the Spanish, who are shod with canvas sandals, having jute rope soles. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Spain has made a dismal failure of her military operations in Cuba.

The climate, the guerilla warfare peculiarly adapted to the physical conditions of the island, the gradual decimating of Spain's forces, and the cutting off of all sources of her revenue from Cuba, have been the means on which the Cubans have relied in their confident anticipation of ultimate triumph. One of the first military measures was the decree forbidding the grinding of sugar cane and the gathering of the tobacco crop, the staple products of the island. The fact that but little sugar has been exported during the last three years, and that nearly all of it had been taxed for the benefit of the Republic, proves the strength and extent of the Cuban occupation of the island.

A proper estimate of the military operations in Cuba can be formed not by consideration of the battles fought, but rather of the campaigns planned by either side.

In the enforcement of the decree against grinding sugar and

gathering tobacco three campaigns have been fought and won by the Cubans. When Gomez and Marti landed in Santiago and conferred with the Maceo brothers, Captain-General Martinez Campos, who had arrived from Spain with large reinforcements, threw a line of about 10,000 men on the boundary between Santiago and Puerto Principe Provinces. He boasted that the inhabitants of Puerto Principe, which was considered a most conservative part of the island, having suffered much in the Ten Years War, would never rise in arms against Spain, and that he would keep Gomez confined to Santiago. General Antonio Maceo made a feint on one point of the line, drew the Spaniards towards him and left an opening of which Gomez took prompt advantage. Gomez thereupon fell upon several towns, captured convoys, and equipped the men of Puerto Principe.

General Maceo kept the Spaniards well employed in Santiago and cut off several convoys destined for the city of Bayamo, to which point Martinez Campos resolved to march.

He had made an elaborate plan. Three columns were to co-operate in surrounding and crushing General Maceo in Santiago, while a cordon of troops was to be placed west of General Gomez. With Maceo out of the way, Campos was to relieve Bayamo, then march with the eastern troops toward Gomez and catch the latter between his two lines. This was to end the war.

Maceo, however, defeated each of the three columns in turn, and then caught Campos at Peralejo, utterly routing the Peninsulars, capturing their convoy and pursuing them to the very gates of Bayamo.

Campos sent for more troops from the west, and while engaged in extricating himself, Generals Roloff and Sanchez had landed with war material in Santa Clara Province and were soon thoroughly organized. The celebrated western march of Gomez and Maceo was next projected.

De Lome had promised that with the advent of the dry season of 1895-6 would come the end of the revolt. Instead, came the invasion of the west, which Campos in vain tried to check. Gomez pursued tactics similar to those employed by the cavalry of the Germans in the Franco-Prussian war. Campos changed his headquarters again and again, always to find that the Cubans had outflanked him. Through Santa Clara, through Matanzas and into Havana Provinces marched the Cubans, threatening even

the capital, which Campos then hurriedly fortified from the land side, throwing out a line of troops south to Batabano. The Cubans cut through this also, and Maceo was left to attend to Pinar del Rio, while Gomez turned eastward. Martinez Campos resigned in despair, being forced to do so by the clamor of the rabid Spaniards in Cuba, who demanded a leader who would follow the traditional cruel policy of Spain. Weyler was the man who truly fulfilled their desires.

Maceo, after having entered nearly every town in Pinar del Rio, capturing much war material, set out to join Gomez in Matanzas. Weyler promptly declared that Pinar del Rio was pacified, that sugar grinding would commence immediately, and that Maceo and Gomez were in full retreat to the east. Maceo at once turned back, and in this, the most westerly Province, successfully resisted all attacks of Weyler for more than a year. Although Maceo had no intention of leaving this Province, Weyler built the western trocha at enormous cost to keep him confined there. Some 60,000 Spanish troops were uselessly placed to guard this trocha, to be killed by the miasma from the trenches and swamps along the line. Weyler's next campaign was against Gomez in Santa Clara, where the latter sustained himself in a very small district against over 50,000 Spanish troops. Blanco arranged a campaign against Calixto Garcia in Santiago, of which Pando has made a signal failure.

Despite Weyler's boast, not a single province is pacified. From east to west the Cubans are masters of the interior, while the Spaniards hold the ports and fortified towns. The Cubans have nevertheless complete access to the coast, as is shown by the receipt of their numerous supply expeditions. As a matter of fact the only operations of the Spanish are the sending of convoys of supplies to the interior towns.

The Cubans have some artillery, and have used a pneumatic dynamite gun with excellent results. Several towns of importance have been taken by the artillery of General Garcia, but the Cubans are chary of capturing towns with artillery, as the bombardment endangers their own friends and relatives.

That no port has been permanently held is due to the lack of a navy, which could not be acquired because of stringent neutrality laws. Spain is aware that Cuba is hopelessly lost to her. She has gradually diminished her efforts. To-day she has only

about 80,000 soldiers fit for duty, as against 200,000 at this season last year. The official records admit a loss of 65,000 to Spain during the first two years. Within the last nine months about 30,000 have been sent home invalided, and there are now about that number on the sick list in Cuba.

Spain's expenditures have averaged about thirteen million dollars a month. The pay of the army is greatly in arrears. Financially and physically, Spain's resources are substantially at an end. Her struggle to retain Cuban has been gigantic, but it has been badly directed. The Cubans, on their part, have shown good judgment in retaining and husbanding their resources, and in taking intelligent advantage of the weak points of their enemy. A people capable of such organization, civil and military, and of fighting a European power to a standstill on a little island like Cuba, without a navy and at first utterly unarmed, have surely given sufficient promise of capability of self-government. Nor is there danger of future internecine strife. The turbulent Indian blood which has proven unfortunate to some Spanish-American countries is entirely absent in Cuba. The racial question is not apt to prove troublesome. Only 30 per cent. of the population is of the negro race, including in this calculation the mixed races, even to the one-sixteenth of African blood.

Education has helped to develop the Cubans, and the fact that most of them have been educated in France and the United States goes far to prove that they understand the principles of republican institutions.

The Cubans have looked to the United States as the great model and protector of American Republics, and, firm in the belief of the sympathy and justice of the American people, they have appealed for recognition as an independent nation. Once free, there are many Cubans who may doubtless desire to follow the example of Texas ; but even as an independent republic, Cuba will always be bound to the United States by the strongest commercial ties, and the conditions of intercourse on Cuba's side must of necessity be the more liberal, since the speedy attainment of her independence shall have been the result of the friendly alliance and intervention of this country.

HORATIO S. RUBENS.